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GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES

A. The form and content of initial reports

1. Under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, each State party undertakes to submit a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures that it has adopted to give effect to the provisions of the Convention and on the progress made in that respect within one year after the entry into force of the Convention for the reporting State, and thereafter at least every four years and further whenever the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women established under the Convention so requests.

2. In order to assist the States parties in fulfilling their obligations under article 18, the Committee recommends that the States parties follow general guidelines as to the form, content and date of reports. The guidelines are to help ensure that the reports are presented in a uniform manner so that the Committee and the States parties can obtain a complete picture of the implementation of the Convention and the progress made therein.

3. The report should be in two parts. Part I should be prepared in accordance with the consolidated guidelines for the initial part of the reports of States parties to be submitted under the various international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as contained in the annex to document HRI/CORE/1.

4. Part II should provide specific information in relation to each provision of the Convention, in particular:

(a) The constitutional, legislative and administrative provisions or other measures in force;

(b) The developments that have taken place and the programmes and institutions that have been established since the entry into force of the Convention;

(c) Any other information on progress made in the fulfilment of each right;

(d) The de facto position as distinct from the de jure position;

(e) Any restrictions or limitations, even of a temporary nature, imposed by law, practice or tradition, or in any other manner on the enjoyment of each right;

(f) The situation of non-governmental organizations and other women's associations and their participation in the elaboration and implementation of plans and programmes of the public authorities.

5. It is recommended that the reports not be confined to mere lists of legal instruments adopted in the country concerned in recent years, but should also include information indicating how those legal instruments are reflected in the actual economic, political and social realities and general conditions existing in the country. As far as possible, States parties should make efforts to provide all data disaggregated by sex in all areas covered by the Convention and the general recommendations of the Committee.

6. States parties are invited to submit copies of the principal legislative, judicial, administrative and other texts referred to in the report so that they can be made available to the Committee. It should be noted, however, that for reasons of expense those texts will not normally be reproduced for general distribution with the report except when the reporting State specifically so requests. It is desirable, when a text is not actually quoted in or annexed to the report, that the report should contain sufficient information to be understood without reference to that text.

7. The reports should reveal obstacles to the participation of women on an equal basis with men in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, and give information on types and frequency of cases of non-compliance with the principle of equal rights.

8. It should be noted that, according to paragraph 323 of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995:

> "States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women are invited, when reporting under article 18 of the Convention, to include information on measures taken to implement the Platform for Action in order to facilitate the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in monitoring effectively women's ability to enjoy the rights guaranteed by the Convention."

In preparing their initial and subsequent reports under the articles of the Convention or in supplementary oral and/or written materials supplied in

connection with reports already submitted, States parties are therefore invited to take into account the 12 critical areas of concern in chapter III of the Platform for Action. It should also be noted that those concerns are compatible with the articles of the Convention and therefore within the mandate of the Committee.

9. In reporting on reservations to the Convention:

(a) Each State party that has entered substantive reservations to the Convention should include information on those reservations in each of its periodic reports;

(b) The State party should indicate why it considered the reservation to be necessary; whether any reservations the State party may or may not have registered on obligations with regard to the same rights set forth in other conventions are consistent with its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and the precise effect of the reservation in terms of national law and policy. It should indicate the plans that it has to limit the effect of reservations and ultimately to withdraw them and, whenever possible, specify a timetable for withdrawing them;

(c) States parties that have entered general reservations which do not refer to a specific article of the Convention or reservations to articles 2 and 3 should make a particular effort to report on the effect and the interpretation of those reservations. The Committee considers such reservations to be incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention.

10. The reports and the supplementary documentation should be submitted in one of the working languages of the Committee (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian or Spanish) in as concise a form as possible.

B. Preparation of second and subsequent periodic reports

11. In preparing second and subsequent periodic reports, States parties should follow the general guidelines and include matters that were not covered in the initial report.

12. As a general rule States parties in their second and subsequent periodic reports should focus on the period between the consideration of their latest report up to the date of preparation of their last one.

13. In their periodic reports States parties should have regard to the previous report and to the proceedings of the Committee in regard to that report, and should include, inter alia, the following:

(a) Legal and other measures adopted since the previous report to implement the Convention;

(b) Actual progress made to promote and ensure the elimination of discrimination against women;

(c) Any significant changes in the status and equality of women since the previous report;

(d) Any remaining obstacle to the participation of women on an equal basis with men in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their country;

(e) Matters raised by the Committee which could not be dealt with at the time when the previous report was considered;

(f) Information on measures taken to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (see para. 8 above).